DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 648 CG 022 172

AUTHOR Sandau-Christopher, Debra
TITLE The School's Role in the Prevention/Intervention of Child Abuse and Neglect. A Manual for School Personnel.
INSTITUTION Colorado State Dept. of Education, Denver.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 88
GRANT 90-CA-1137
NOTE 30p.
PUB TYPE Guides - General (050)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Child Abuse; *Child Neglect; Children; Elementary Secondary Education; *Intervention; *Prevention; *School Role

ABSTRACT

This handbook on child abuse and neglect was written to assist school personnel, including administrators, teachers, counselors, school nurses, and school social workers in defining abuse and neglect and in developing policy and training programs to best address the abuse issue. Topics addressed include: (1) understanding child abuse and neglect; (2) identifying child abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse; (3) responding to disclosure; (4) reporting procedures, including method of reporting, Colorado Law--Child Protection Act, model school policy, and sample reporting form; (5) assisting the child victim and family by working with the abused child in the classroom and working with parents of the abused child; (6) interagency cooperation, including social services and law enforcement; and (7) staff training, including the need for staff training, Colorado School Laws, sample training agenda, and concerns of school staff. A resource list consisting of relevant local, state, and national agencies, a bibliography of publications in child abuse and neglect, and a list of members of the Colorado State Board of Education are included. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED313648

CG

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN THE PREVENTION/INTERVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

C6022172

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Bassett

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN THE PREVENTION/INTERVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A MANUAL FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

DEVELOPED BY DEBRA SANDAU-CHRISTOPHER

Office of Federal Relations and Instructional Services
Dr. Arvin C. Blome, Assistant Commissioner
1988
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
201 E. COLFAX AVENUE
DENVER, COLORADO 80203

Funds Provided By The
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Grant #90-CA-1137

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

INTRODUCTION iii

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 1

IDENTIFYING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Physical Abuse 3
- Neglect 4
- Emotional Abuse 5
- Sexual Abuse 6

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE 7

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Method of Reporting 9
- Colorado Law – Child Protection Act (excerpts) 10
- Model School Policy 13
- Sample Reporting Form 14

ASSISTING THE CHILD VICTIM AND FAMILY

- Working with the Abused Child in the Classroom 15
- Working with Parents of the Abused Child 16

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

- Social Services 17
- Law Enforcement 18

STAFF TRAINING

- Need For Staff Training 19
- Colorado School Laws – Teacher TrainingHouse Bill 1321 20
- Sample Training Agenda 21
- Concerns of School Staff 22

RESOURCES 23

BIBLIOGRAPHY 24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Colorado Department of Education gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations for their assistance in the development of this guide:

Kathleen McKinnie, Social Worker
Thompson School District
Loveland, Colorado

Jane Beverage, Child Protection Program Administrator
Colorado Department of Social Services

Pam Hinish, Director–Central Registry
Colorado Department of Social Services

Dr. Richard Krugman, Director
C. Henry Kempe National Center for
the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse

Patricia Schene, Director
American Association for Protecting Children
American Human Association

William Scott, Bureau Commander
Arvada Police Department

Dan Gossert, Director–Family Health Services
Colorado Department of Health

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, considerable attention has been given to the importance of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. This attention has resulted in some positive strides toward prevention and intervention at the local, state, and national level. All 50 states have mandated professionals (including educators) to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Training programs specific to certain professions have been developed and implemented. The media has done much to heighten public awareness, and coalitions and clearinghouses of information have been established. While these and a host of other accomplishments provide evidence that progress has been made, there is still much to do.

The number of children still being maltreated and not receiving help is sobering. Documented cases show that a large percentage of reported abuse cases (47 percent) are closed after an initial investigation, in some cases even if maltreatment has been determined. This, coupled with a common belief that the majority of abuse cases go unreported, demonstrates that many abused children are stranded, not receiving any legal or societal assistance.

Because of the large number of children still being maltreated and because Colorado law mandates reporting, it is essential that educators understand how to recognize and report suspected abuse.

This handbook was written to assist school personnel, including administrators, teachers, counselors, school nurses, and school social workers in defining abuse and neglect and in developing policy and training programs to best address the abuse issue.

UNDERSTANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is generally defined as nonaccidental physical or mental injury caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or caretakers. This includes the four following types of abuse.

Physical abuse: nonaccidental physical injury to a child.

Physical neglect: failure on the part of the child's caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision.

Emotional maltreatment: the constant belittling and rejecting of a child – not providing a positive emotional atmosphere.

Sexual abuse: sexual exploitation, molestation, or prostitution of a child.

WHAT CAUSES CHILD ABUSE?

There is no one single cause of child abuse. It involves children and parents (or caretakers) of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds and religions. Research has shown that there are certain factors which can be positively correlated with abuse. Listed below are some factors which may contribute to child abuse.

Individual Characteristic

Adult Caretaker:
- has history of being abused and or neglected as a child
- has unrealistic expectations of child that are inconsistent with the developmental age of the child
- has poor impulse control
- reacts to stress with violence
- has poor coping skills in stressful situations
- does not have a support system (family and friends) to help with the demands of parenting
- does not have models of successful family relationships
- uses physical punishment as primary method of discipline
- may view child as unappealing, "different", difficult
- history of alcohol and/or substance abuse

Environmental Conditions
- unemployment/financial change in situation
- death in the family
- changes in family structure (divorce, separation)
- physical or mental illness of one or both parents
- inadequate housing
- another pregnancy or birth
- change in place of residence
- feelings of rejection

Societal Attitudes
- acceptance of violence
- lack of willingness to become involved
- belief that parents (adults) have the right to treat children any way they please

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CHILD ABUSE?

The effects of child abuse on the child cover a broad range from little or no effect to minor or major physical and emotional problems. Effects will differ depending on such things as the child's relationship to perpetrator, the degree of force used, the length of time the abuse goes on, and the child's age. Children who have been abused may be delayed in physical and/or developmental growth and they may find it difficult to trust others.

Effects you might notice in the school setting:

- learning disorders
- behavior problems (aggressive or withdrawn)
- below grade level performance
- delays in the ability to speak and to understand spoken language
- psychosomatic illnesses
- poor coordination, deficiencies in motor skills
- low self-esteem
- clinging behavior, child is overly solicitous

Identification of child abuse is a key factor in the prevention and intervention of abuse and neglect. Educators have the opportunity and can often identify a particular type of maltreatment by becoming aware of and recognizing certain physical and behavioral indicators.

On the following pages, physical and behavioral indicators of the four types of child abuse are listed. Please note that not any single indicator proves that abuse is taking place but the repeated presence of an indicator or a combination of indicators should alert educators to the possibility of abuse.

The lists of physical and behavioral indicators on the next four pages are adapted from:

American Association for Protecting Children, *"Guidelines for Schools"*, **American Humane Association, Denver, Co.**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *"The Educator's Role in Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect."* **U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.**

PHYSICAL AND BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

PHYSICAL ABUSE*

Physical indicators	Behavioral Indicators of Child	Behavioral Indicators of Parent(s)
Unexplained bruises and welts: – on face, lips, mouth – on torso, back, buttocks, thighs – in various stages of healing – clustered, forming regular patterns – reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) – on several different surface areas – regularly appear after absence, weekend, or vacation ***Unexplained burns:*** – cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back, or buttocks – immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut-shaped on buttocks or genitalia) – patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. – rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso ***Unexplained fractures:*** – to skull, nose, facial structure – in various states of healing – multiple or spiral fractures ***Unexplained lacerations or abrasions:*** – to mouth, lips, gums, eyes – to external genitalia – human bite marks – bald spots	Wary of adult contacts Apprehensive when other children cry Behavioral extremes: – aggressiveness, or – withdrawal – overly compliant Afraid to go home Reports injury by parents Exhibits anxiety about normal activities, e.g., napping Complains of soreness and moves awkwardly Destructive to self and others Early to school or stays late as if afraid to go home Accident prone Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate Chronic runaway (especially adolescents) Cannot tolerate physical contact or touch Seems frightened of parents Shows little or no distress at being separated from parents Apt to seek affection from any adult	Seems unconcerned about child Sees child as bad, evil, a monster, etc. Alcohol/drug misuse Attempts to conceal child's injury or to protect identity of person responsible History of abuse as a child Discipline not consistent with child's age, condition or behavior Explanation of child's injury not consistent with type of injury Offers no explanation for child's injury

***Not any one of these indicators would confirm physical abuse but identification of several should cause concern.**

NEGLECT*

Physical indicators	Behavioral Indicators of Child	Behavioral Indicators of Parent(s)
Consistent hunger	Begging, stealing food	Alcohol/drug misuse
Inappropriate dress – clothing dirty or wrong for the weather	Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep	Disorganized, upset home life
Poor hygiene	States there is no caretaker at home	Isolated from friends, relatives, neighbors; lacks social skills
Often tired, no energy	Frequent school absence or tardiness	Long-term chronic illnesses
Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods	Destructive, pugnacious	History of neglect as a child
Unattended physical problems or medical needs	School dropout (adolescents)	Lacks motivation, lethargic
Abandonment	Early emancipation from family (adolescents)	
Lice	Alcohol/Drug misuse	
Distended stomach, emaciated	Sexual misconduct	

***Not any one of these indicators would confirm neglect but identification of several should cause concern.**

EMOTIONAL ABUSE*

Physical indicators	Behavioral Indicators of Child	Behavioral Indicators of Parent(s)
Speech disorders Lags in physical development Failure to thrive (especially in infants) Asthma, severe allergies, or ulcers Substance abuse	Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive, etc.) Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Behavioral extremes: – compliant, passive – aggressive, demanding Overly adaptive behavior: – inappropriately adult – inappropriately infantile Developmental lags (mental, emotional) Delinquent behavior (especially adolescents)	Children in the family are treated unequally Blames or belittles child Cold and rejecting Withholds love Lack nurturing skills Ignore children's problems

***Not any one of these indicators would confirm emotional abuse but identification of several should cause concern.**

SEXUAL ABUSE*†

Physical indicators	Behavioral Indicators of Child	Behavioral Indicators of Parent(s)
Difficulty in walking or sitting	Inability to concentrate	Jealous or overly protective of child
Torn, stained or bloody underclothing	Arriving at school early - leaving late	Isolation/alienation of child and family members within the community
Pain or itching in genital area	Frequent absences from school. Many times justified by parent/ caretaker	Frequent absences from home by one of the caretakers/parents of the child
Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas	Abrupt change in child's behavior/ moodiness	Blurring of generational boundaries
Venereal disease	Depression - excessive crying	Role reversal of mother and daughter
Frequent urinary or yeast infection	Clinging behavior	Rigid, restrictive home environment
Frequent unexplained sore throats	Lack of self-esteem	Alcohol/Drug misuse
Red or swollen genital area	Reluctance to undress for physical education/nurse	
Odor in genital area	Unwillingness to participate in physical/recreational activities	
Pregnancy	Newly acquired bodily complaints (stomach aches, vaginal pain)	
	Afraid to be alone with adults - especially male	
	Severe drop in school performance	
	Seductive, promiscuous behavior toward peers or adults	
	Persistent and inappropriate sexual behavior	
	Repeated attempts to run away from home	
	Low self-image	
	Poor peer relationships	
	Threatened by physical contact, closeness	
	Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings	
	Self-destructive behaviors	

***Not any one of these indicators would confirm sexual abuse but identification of several should cause concern.**

†Often there are no visible indicators.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO A CHILD'S DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Children disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may disclose through very direct and specific communication but unfortunately that is not usually the case. More often the child will disclose through indirect means such as "Our neighbor wears funny underwear" or "My brother bothers me at night" or by asking that you promise not to tell if a secret is disclosed.

It is important to listen, encourage and assure the child. Ask questions if the child's comments seem to be covering up an underlying problem. Let the child know you cannot promise not to tell if the secret is something that is hurting him/her.

Occasionally a child will disclose during a class session. It is important for the educator to acknowledge the disclosure but not discuss it in front of the other students. After the class session the educator should talk with the child in a quiet, private place.

Below are some suggestions for responding to disclosure.

DO:

- believe the child.
- find a quiet, private place to talk to the child.
- take a positive approach to the problem - reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone.
- listen to the child. Let him/her talk openly about the situation.
- rephrase important thoughts for clarification - use the child's vocabulary.
- allow the child to go at his/her own pace - it may be easier for the child to disclose by using a doll, a puppet, or by drawing or writing about the incident.
- ask only for information that will clarify your suspicion. Proper authorities will gather the detailed information.
- tell the child that there is help available.
- reassure the child that you will do your best to protect and support him/her.
- let the child know you must report the abuse to someone who has helped other children like him/her and their families.
- report the incident to the proper authorities.
- let the child know what will happen when the report is made (if you have appropriate information).
- seek out your own support person(s) to help you work through your feelings about the disclosure (if needed).

DON'T:

- promise confidentially.
- express panic or shock.
- convey anger or impatience if the child is not ready to discuss the abuse.
- make negative comments about the perpetrator or get into a moral lecture about the incident.
- disclose the information indiscriminately. Tell only those adults who need the information to protect and support the child.

METHOD OF REPORTING

School personnel have a legal* and moral obligation to make a report if child abuse or neglect is suspected.

School personnel need NOT investigate the situation. Investigation is the job of child protective services.

The report, **verbal** and **written** should be made to your local child protection agency as specified by school policies and legal statutes.

School Boards of Education are required to provide inservice training which will train teachers to recognize and report child abuse and neglect.**

REMEMBER:

- the report should be made **as soon** as there is reason to suspect abuse (review indicators lists).
- IMMEDIATE oral report and PROMPT written follow-up (see page 14) are mandatory.
- the report is NOT an accusation against a parent or child, but merely a report of a suspicion. The report should be handled in a sensitive, non-judgemental manner.
- if a person fails to report, the child (or other children) is left potentially at risk for future abuse.
- the person who reports "in good faith" is "immune from liability, both civil and criminal."*
- if you report suspected abuse to someone in your school and expect them to report to social services, it is important to follow up to make certain the report was made. You as the person who "knows or suspects" the abuse is liable.

*See CHILD PROTECTION ACT, p. 10
**See COLORADO SCHOOL LAW, p. 21

COLORADO LAW - CHILD PROTECTION ACT

EXCERPTS FROM TITLE 19 - THE CHILDREN'S CODE* CONCERNING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Title 19, Article 3, Part 3

19-3-301 **SHORT TITLE**

This part 3 shall be known and may be cited as the "Child Protection Act of 1987".

19-3-302 **LEGISLATIVE DECLARATION**

The general assembly hereby declares that the complete reporting of child abuse is a matter of public concern and that, in enacting this part 3, it is the intent of the general assembly to protect the best interests of children of this state and to offer protective services in order to prevent any further harm to a child suffering from abuse. It is also the intent of the general assembly that child protection teams publicly discuss public agencies' responses to child abuse and neglect reports so that the public and the general assembly may be better informed concerning the operation and administration of this part 3.

19-3-303 **DEFINITIONS**

(1) (A) "Abuse" or "Child Abuse or Neglect" means an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child:

(I) Any case in which a child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fracture of any bone, subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, or death, and such condition or death is not justifiably explained, or where the history given concerning such condition or death is at variance with the degree or type of such condition or death, or circumstances indicate that such condition or death may not be the product of an accidental occurrence.

(II) Any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution.

(III) Any case in which the child's parents, legal guardians, or custodians fail to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

19-3-304 **PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

(1) Any person specified in subsection (2) of this section who has reasonable cause to **know** or **suspect** that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect **shall immediately report or cause a report to be made** of such fact to the County Department or Local Law Enforcement Agency.

(2) Persons required to report such abuse or neglect or circumstances or conditions shall include any:

(A) Physician or surgeon, including a physician in training;
(B) Child health associate;
(C) Medical examiner or coroner;
(D) Dentist;
(E) Osteopath;
(F) Optometrist;
(G) Chiropractor;
(H) Chiropodist or Podiatrist;
(I) Registered nurse or licensed practical nurse;
(J) Hospital personnel engaged in the admission, care, or treatment of patients;
(K) Christian science practitioner;
(L) **Public or private school official or employee;**
(M) Social worker or worker in a family care home or child care center as defined in section 26-6-102, C.R.S.;
(N) Mental health professional;
(O) Dental hygienist;

(P) Psychologist;
(Q) Physical therapist;
(R) Veterinarian;
(S) Peace officer as defined in section 18-1-901 (3) (1), C.R.S.;
(T) Pharmacist;
(U) Commercial film and photographic print processor as provided in subsection (2.5) of this section.

(3) In addition to those persons specifically required by this section to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect and circumstances or conditions which might reasonably result in abuse or neglect, **any other person may report** known or suspected child abuse or neglect and circumstances or conditions which might reasonable result in child abuse or neglect to the local law enforcement agency or the county department.

(4) Any person who willfully violates the provisions of subsection (1) of this section:

(A) Commits a Class 3 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, can be punished by a fine not to exceed seven hundred fifty dollars; or county jail not to exceed six months imprisonment.

(B) Shall be liable for damages proximately caused thereby.

19-3-307. **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

(1) Reports of known or suspected child abuse or neglect made pursuant to this article shall be made **immediately** to the county department of the local law enforcement agency and shall be followed promptly by a written report prepared by those persons required to report.

19-3-309. **IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY - PERSONS REPORTING**

Any person, other than the perpetrator, complicitor, coconspirator, or accessory, participating in good faith in the making of a report or in a judicial proceeding held pursuant to this title, the taking of photographs or X rays, or the placing in temporary protective custody of a child pursuant to section 19-3-204 or otherwise performing his duties or acting pursuant to this part 3 **shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, or termination of employment that otherwise might result by reason of such reporting.** For the purpose of any proceedings, civil or criminal, the good faith of any such person reporting child abuse, any such person taking photographs or X rays, and any such person who has legal authority to place a child in protective custody shall be presumed.

The above excerpts are but a small portion of the Colorado Children's Code. For more detailed information locate your school district copy of the Colorado Children's Code. To order a copy contact L. G. Printing Company, 1980 S. Quebec, Denver, Colorado 80231, (303) 751-3956.

IMPORTANT

You, as an individual who suspects abuse, are responsible for making certain that the report is made to either your local department of social services or your local law enforcement agency. **This legal responsibility is not satisfied by reporting your suspicion to other school personnel.**

AFTER A REPORT IS MADE

A member of the local department of social services and/or local law enforcement agency will investigate the case, notify the family that a report has been filed, and check the child's condition. If the child appears to be in immediate danger, he/she will be put into temporary protective custody.

In severe cases, the court determines whether temporary or permanent separation from the family is necessary.

Treatment for the child and/or family may be recommended or mandated.

Policies and procedures vary from county to county. For more information on reporting and follow-up procedures, contact your county department of social services.

SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORTING

It is essential that every school district have a written district policy for reporting child abuse and neglect. The policy should be based on Colorado law with input from the local department of social services and local law enforcement. All school district employees should be aware of the existence and content of such policy. The policy should be reviewed and updated annually.

MODEL SCHOOL REPORTING POLICY*

Important elements that should be cited in a school district reporting policy regarding child abuse and neglect are:

1. A brief rationale for involving school personnel in reporting.
2. The name and appropriate section numbers of the state reporting statute.
3. Who specifically is mandated to report and (if applicable) who may report.
4. Reportable conditions as defined by state law.
5. The person or agency to receive reports.
6. The information required of the reporter (include a sample of district reporting form).
7. Expected professional conduct by school employees.
8. The exact language of the law to define "abuse" and "neglect", if necessary, explain, clarify or expand.
9. The method by which school personnel are to report and the time in which to report. List the telephone number of the local social services agency.
10. Immunity from civil and criminal or termination of employment for those who, in good faith, report to participate in an investigation or judicial proceeding.
11. Penalty for failure to report, established by state law.
12. Action taken by school board for failure to report.
13. Any provisions of the law regarding the confidentiality of records pertaining to reports of suspected abuse or neglect.

*Adapted From **Education Policies and Practices Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect and Recommendations for Policy Development.**
Education Commission of the States, 1976.

WRITTEN REPORT

(SAMPLE REPORTING FORM)

Name of child: _____ Birthdate: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____ Grade: _____

Parent(s) Guardian: _____

Parents Address (if different): _____ Home Phone: _____

Parents Place of Employment: _____ Work Phone: _____

Family Composition: _____

1. ***Check items that apply:***

____ Dislocation/Sprains	____ Lack of Supervision	____ Emotional Neglect
____ Twisting/Shaking	____ Abandonment	____ Educational Neglect
____ Malnutrition	____ Burns, Scalds	____ Physical Neglect
____ Exposure to Elements	____ Medical Neglect	____ Sexual Abuse
____ Cuts, Bruises, Welts		

Description: _____

2. Briefly describe the reporter's concern for the child: _____

_____

3. Describe the child's account of how the incident occurred and possible witnesses: _____

_____

4. Describe any previously known or suspected abuse or neglect to child or siblings: _____

_____

5. Provide name(s), address(es), and relationship to child of person(s) responsible for suspected abuse or neglect (if known): _____

_____

6. Call to Social Services: _____ (Date) _____ (Time) _____ (Person Taking Report)

_____ (Name of Person reporting to DSS) _____ (Position) _____ (School)

Recommendation: Print reporting forms in triplicate. Send the original to your local social service agency and use the other copies for school district files.

WORKING WITH THE ABUSED CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES*

School staff are often uncomfortable and uncertain about interacting with an abused child when he/she returns to or enters school. The classroom teacher can play a significant role in the rehabilitation of an abused child by acknowledging, but not dwelling on, the situation and then creating a supportive and safe environment for the child. This can be accomplished by providing the child with the following:

1) **SECURITY.** The child needs to feel safe. He/she needs to know that you can be trusted; that you will not touch without asking if it is okay; that you will not tell others about the abuse; that you will not embarrass him/her in front of others. Let the child know how you would respond if another abuse incident occurred. The child needs to know that you look forward to seeing him/her each day and that he/she BELONGS in the group.

2) **STRUCTURE.** Initially, structure will be the child's security. The child may need very clear instructions. It may mean you will have to say, "Pick up your pencil and begin with this work." Abused children will borrow from your strength and direction until they can mobilize on their own.

3) **IDENTITY.** Give the child information about him/herself. "You are someone who makes friends easily," or "You are someone who really tries hard on difficult problems."

4) **CONSISTENCY AND PREDICTABILITY.** The abused child may have experienced a great deal of upheaval in his/her family life, and possibly much family dysfunction. The child needs to be able to predict your behavior, and to be clear about your expectations. It is important to share information about new situations before they arise. In addition, it is important that the classroom teacher not tolerate inappropriate behavior. If the child exhibits violent or sexually aggressive behavior, the teacher should respond immediately as with any inappropriate behavior.

5) **SENSE OF BELONGING.** Be sure the child's work is displayed; that he/she has belongings in the room and a place for them. The child should be seated where a feeling of inclusion can be gained. Reinforce the child's association with other children.

6) **INTIMACY IN APPROPRIATE WAYS.** Talk to the child one on one, share something about yourself, use eye contact. It is best not to touch an abuse victim because a touch may cause a chain of flashbacks. When you have established a good relationship, ask the child if he/she minds a hand on his/her shoulder, and only with permission, touch the child occasionally.

7) **APPROVAL.** Be certain to acknowledge the child with a nod, a wink, warmth in your voice, a note on his/her paper — however you feel most comfortable.

8) **ENHANCEMENT OF POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT.** The child needs to know he/she is valued, accepted and capable.

9) **SUPPORT FOR FAMILY.** The abused child still cares about and needs to believe in family. Respect and support the child's family. Family members may feel embarrassed, fearful and isolated. Their feelings and privacy should be respected.

***Adapted from the Jefferson County Public School Child Abuse Prevention Training Package, Lakewood, Colorado, 1984.**

WORKING WITH PARENTS OF ABUSED CHILDREN

If parents of an abused child have adequate support and information, they are in a good position to help the child. Some steps in providing support for parents are listed below.

1. **Provide accurate information as needed, such as:**
   a. the school district has a legal responsibility to report all incidents of abuse,
   b. children rarely lie about sexual abuse, and
   c. offenders are usually known to the victim.
2. **Express faith in the parent's ability to cope with the situation.**
3. **Point out the positive steps the family has already taken, such as:**
   a. the child's ability to tell someone about the abuse, and
   b. the parent(s) believing and supporting the child.
4. **Help the parent(s) to reassure the child by:**
   a. believing the child,
   b. supporting the disclosure,
   c. empathizing with the child, and
   d. protecting and supporting the child.
5. **Differentiate the parent's concerns from the child's concerns.**
   a. Parents worry about the social and legal repercussions of what happened. Many times they worry about the child being victimized again and may set strict limits which the child doesn't understand.
   b. Children feel guilty and worry about hurting their parents and/or breaking up the family.
6. **Share ideas about how to help children protect themselves, such as:**
   a. teaching the child self-protection skills,
   b. building self-esteem, and
   c. providing the child with a sense of empowerment.
7. **Provide information on resources as needed (See the resource section of this manual).**
   a. Agencies
   b. Material resources

SOCIAL SERVICES

Responsibilities of Social Services:

The responsibilities of the department of social services in suspected cases of child abuse include:

- investigating cases of alleged child abuse,
- providing services and treatment for the child and family where child abuse has occurred.

Suggestions for strengthening the working relationship between schools and local departments of social services (DSS):

- Request a copy of written policies and procedures on child abuse/neglect investigations. Review procedures - develop list of questions if clarification is needed.
- Get to know DSS child protection intake workers. If possible, set up a meeting with them so faces and names become familiar (having a breakfast or lunch meeting is an effective way to accomplish this).
- Share school personnel frustrations related to child abuse and neglect with DSS - ask for clarification on specific questions and concerns.
- Ask what frustrations DSS workers have with the schools - how can those frustrations be addressed?
- Educate school personnel on the procedures used by DSS, emphasize "what," "why," and "how" they investigate and the limitations that exist. Set realistic expectations for what DSS can and cannot do.
- If a school employee has a complaint about the handling of a case, it should be shared with the DSS worker and/or his/her supervisor.
- **Don't delay** reporting a suspected case. Cases reported at the end of the day or end of the week can create a new set of problems (child is leaving to go home, DSS workers are off duty, etc.) The delay may also result in further abuse of the child.
- Know what is an appropriate referral.
- If DSS has not followed up with results of an investigation, contact the intake worker and request information.
- Invite a DSS intake worker to present at staff inservice training.
- When developing or revising school policies and procedures on suspected child abuse cases, ask DSS for input.
- Remember that clear communication is the key to a successful intervention. Don't hesitate to call on social services for advice or clarification.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Responsibilities of Law Enforcement:

The responsibilities of law enforcement agencies in suspected cases of child abuse and neglect include:

- investigating cases of alleged child abuse,
- gathering and maintaining all evidence,
- immediately reporting incidents to the local department of social services, and
- taking the child into protective custody if determined necessary.

Suggestions for strengthening the working relationship between schools and local law enforcement agencies:

- Request a copy of written policies and procedures on child abuse/neglect investigations. Review procedures - develop list of questions if clarification is needed.
- Get to know the law enforcement officers involved in child protection. If possible set up a meeting with them so faces and names become familiar (having a breakfast or lunch meeting together with staff from the department of social services is an effective way to accomplish this).
- Share school personnel frustrations related to child abuse and neglect with law enforcement - ask for clarification on specific questions and concerns.
- Ask what frustrations law enforcement officers have with the schools - how can those frustrations be addressed?
- If a school employee has a complaint about the handling of a case, it should be shared with the officer and/or his/her supervisor.
- Invite a law enforcement officer to present information at a staff inservice training.
- When developing or revising school policies and procedures on suspected child abuse cases, ask local law enforcement for input.
- Assist law enforcement in gathering information about the child and/or child's family.
- When reporting a suspected case, request a plainclothes officer in an unmarked car (not available in every city/county).
- Remember that clear communication is the key to a successful intervention. Don't hesitate to call on your local law enforcement agency for advice or clarification.

NEED FOR STAFF TRAINING

In 1984 the Colorado Legislature, in responding to the need for recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, passed House Bill 1321 (effective January 1, 1985) which requires local Boards of Education to:

"provide district teachers with a periodic inservice program which shall provide:

1) *information about the Child Protection Act of 1975,*
2) *instruction designed to assist teachers in recognizing child abuse or neglect,*
3) *instruction designed to provide teachers with information on how to report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, and*
4) *information on how to assist the child victim and his family."*

In addition, the Child Protection Act** requires any **"school official or employee"** who suspects abuse to make an immediate report to the county department of social services.

Staff training is essential in meeting the reporting law requirements and in fulfilling the requirements of Colorado School Laws. All staff - including administrators, teachers, special services, teacher, aids, custodians, secretaries, food service staff, and bus drivers should be trained to identify and report child abuse and neglect based on Colorado law and school district policy.

* See Colorado School Laws, p. 21
**See CHILD PROTECTION ACT, p. 10

COLORADO SCHOOL LAWS

EXCERPTS FROM COLORADO REVISED STATUTES CONCERNING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT TEACHER TRAINING

22-32-109 **BOARD OF EDUCATION – SPECIFIC DUTIES**

(1)(2) To provide for a periodic in-service program for all district teachers which shall provide information about the "Child Protection Act of 1987", part 3 of article 3 of title 19, C.R.S., instruction designed to assist teachers in recognizing child abuse or neglect, and instruction designed to provide teachers with information on how to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect and how to assist the child-victim and his family.

22-60-103 **DEFINITIONS**

(2)(A) "Approved program of preparation" means a program of study for teacher preparation, including student teaching, that meets the standard of the state board of education and that upon completion leads to a recommendation for certification by an accepted institution of higher education.

(B) Included in such approved program of preparation, there shall be a course which includes information about the "Child Protection Act of 1987 part 3 of article 3 of title 19, C.R.S., instruction designed to assist teachers in recognizing child abuse or neglect, and instruction designed to provide teachers with information on how to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect and how to assist the child-victim and his family.

(C) An accepted out-of-state institution of higher education shall be deemed to have an approved program of teacher preparation if its program is equivalent to a similar program of studies which is offered by a Colorado accepted institution of higher education, excluding the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection (2).

SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA

PREVENTION/INTERVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

I. **Introduction and Overview**
   - Trainer(s)
   - Participants

II. **Characteristics of child abuse and neglect**
   - Definitions of various types of child abuse
   - Incidence of child abuse
   - Effects of abuse on children

III. **Colorado Laws regarding child abuse and neglect***
   - CRS 22-32-109, 22-60-103
   - Child Protection Act
   - Discussion of legal issues

IV. **Identifying the abused and neglected child***
   - Physical indicators
   - Behavioral indicators
   - Family indicators

V. **Responding to disclosure***
   - Do's and Don'ts of responding to abuse
   - Role-play situations

VI. **Reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect***
   - Legal responsibilities
   - School district policy and procedures
   - Example reporting form

VII. **After the report is made**
   - Role of Social Services
   - Role of Law Enforcement
   - Court process
   - Community resources/Treatment options
   - Interagency cooperation

VIII. **Assisting the child victim and family***
   - Classroom techniques
   - Working with the parents/families of abused children
   - On-going support

IX. **Staff questions and concerns about child abuse/neglect.**

X. **Approaches to prevention**
   - K-12 curriculum
   - Community awareness
   - Resources in community
   - Parenting skills in curriculum

***If staff training time is limited, these items are priority based on the requirements in Colorado School Laws.**

CONCERNS OF SCHOOL STAFF

School staff often have concerns and even fears about the school implementing a child abuse prevention/intervention program. These concerns and fears are usually based on lack of knowledge about the program and its intent. Below are listed some common concerns that may need to be addressed during training.

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:

... What happens after we report?

... Why don't we ever hear what happens to the child?

... Why doesn't social services ever do anything?

... When I report a suspected case to my school administrator, he/she doesn't report it. What should I do?

... Why should I report? Nothing is ever done and the child suffers more.

... If I report, is the child hurt more?

... We did what we were supposed to do; why didn't the legal system follow through?

... What do you do if the child/victim is the son or daughter of a close friend? My school principal? A minister? A policeman?

... What are my legal responsibilities?

... What is the legal recourse for the accused?

... What if the caseworker tells the parent I'm the one who reported?

... Do I report if the abuse - either physical or sexual - happened several years ago?

... Will the child be removed from the home? From school?

... What do the police do? social services? the hospital?

... Where is the line between parental discipline and abuse?

... Where do I find resources in my community?

... If it's a child beating another child (peer or sibling), should I still report?

... What if I suspect abuse when I'm off duty (example - a neighbor)? Am I still obligated to report?

... What constitutes suspicion? How much investigation should I do?

... What if a child accuses me or another teacher of abuse?

... Do I keep the report confidential? Shouldn't I tell others who work with the child?

... If the report comes from outside school, how much information should I give law enforcement? social services?

... What if a child reports during class?

... Should a teacher stay with the child during the interview by social services/law enforcement?

... Doesn't teaching this prevention program scare children? cause children to become rebellious? cause children to defy authority?

... What if you suspect abuse, report the incident, nothing happens and then the child shows signs of abuse again?

... Does teaching a prevention program promote sexual activity?

AGENCIES

LOCAL
Social Services, Hospital, Law Enforcement, Rape Crisis Center, Health Department, Health Clinic

STATE
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203(303) 866-6782

Colorado Department of Social Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203-1714(303) 866-3003

Rape Assistance and Awareness Program
2101 East 16th Avenue
Denver, CO 80203(303) 329-9922

NATIONAL
American Association for Protecting Children
9725 East Hampden
Denver, CO 80231 (303) 695-0811

Anti-Social and Violent Behavior Branch
National Institute of Mental Health
Department of Health and Human Services
Parklawn Building, Room 18-105
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockerville, MD 20857 (301) 443-3725

C. Henry Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment
of Child Abuse and Neglect
1205 Oneida Street
Denver, CO 80220 (303) 321-3963

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect
P.O. Box 1182
Washington, D.C. 20013 (703) 821-2086

National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse
332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 950
Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 663-3520

National Crime Prevention Council
The Woodward Building
733 Fifteenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Association for Protecting Children. **Guidelines for Schools.** American Humane Association, Denver, Colorado.

Downer, Ann. **Prevention of Sexual Abuse: A Trainer's Manual.** Seattle Institute for Child Advocacy, Seattle, Washington, 1984.

Erickson, Edsel L; McEvoy, Alan; and Colucci, Nicholas D., Jr. **Child Abuse & Neglect: A Guidebook for Educators and Community Leaders,** Second Edition. Holmes Beach, Florida: Learning Publications, 1984.

Fread, A. Kelley. **The Child Abuse Crises: Impact On The Schools.** Arlington, Virginia: Capitol Publications, 1985.

Finkelhor, David. **Child Sexual Abuse.** New York: Free Press, 1984.

Kempe, Ruth and C. Henry. **Child Abuse.** Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Kempe, C. Henry and Helfer, Ray E. **The Battered Child,** Third Edition. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Rush, Florence. **The Best Kept Secret: Sexual Abuse of Children.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Russel, A. and Trainor, C. **Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective.** American Humane Association - Children's Division, Denver, Colorado, 1984.

Sandau-Christopher, Debra. **Action Against Assault: Self-Protective Behaviors for Children and Adolescents.** Colorado Department of Health, Denver, Colorado, 1984.

Sandord, Linda Tschirhart. **The Silent Children.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Tower, Cynthia Crosson. **Child Abuse and Neglect: A Teacher's Handbook for Detection, Reporting and Classroom Management.** National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1984.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. **The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect.** Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office Retail Distribution Division/Consigned Branch, Washington, D.C., 1984.

COLORADO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

DR. TOM HOWERTON, CHAIR ..... COLORADO SPRINGS
FIFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

DR. RICHARD KRAFT, VICE CHAIR ..... BOULDER
SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

SYBIL S. DOWNING ..... BOULDER
MEMBER AT LARGE

GLADYS S. EDDY ..... FORT COLLINS
FOURTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

WARREN E. "GIL" GILBERTSON ..... STEAMBOAT SPRINGS
THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

PATRICIA M. HAYES ..... ENGLEWOOD
SIXTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

ART PANSING ..... DENVER
FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSIONER
DR. WILLIAM T. RANDALL

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
DR. ARVIN C. BLOME